

## Message Text

SECRET

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13-11

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OFA-01 OES-03 IO-11 DLOS-04 /088 W

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R 212205Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9737

INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USCINCSO

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

S E C R E T GUATEMALA 0412

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR MCAP GT BH

SUBJECT: BELIZE: GOVERNOR POSNETT'S COMMENTS ON GUATEMALAN NAVAL  
STRENGTH

REF: BELIZE 26

1. GOVERNOR ERRED IN HIS STATEMENT, REPORTED PARA SIX  
REFTEL, THAT GUATEMALA HAS 13 GUNBOATS AT CARRIBBEAN PORT  
OF SANTO TOMAS. OUR MOST RECENT REPORTS ON GUATEMALAN  
NAVAL STRENGTH WERE CONTAINED IN GUATEMALA 4943 (DTG 112215Z  
SEP 75) AND 5231 (DTG 241315Z SEP 75), AND THESE REMAIN  
ACCURATE. THERE ARE EIGHT PATROL BOATS AND ONE LCM  
PRESENTLY AT SANTO TOMAS, INCLUDING THE TWO TRANSFERRED  
THERE FROM THE PACIFIC COAST IN OCTOBER. THE LCM COULD  
TRANSPORT ABOUT 50 TROOPS. A FEW MORE COULD BE CARRIED  
ON THE OTHER BOATS, AT THE COST OF LIMITING THEIR EFFECTIVE-  
NESS FOR BATTLE, BUT CERTAINLY FAR SHORT OF TRANS-  
PORTING THE ENTIRE PUERTO BARRIOS ARMY BATTALION.

2. NEW SUBJECT. BELIZE A-28 OF DECEMBER 2, 1975,  
RECEIVED BY US ON JANUARY 19, REPORTS A RUMOR CIR-  
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CULATING IN BELIZE THAT GUATEMALA NEEDS POSSESSION OF THE

PUNTA GORDA AREA TO GUARANTEE ITS ACCESS TO THE ATLANTIC BECAUSE GUATEMALA'S ENTIRE PRESENT CARIBBEAN COAST IS "LEASED" FROM HONDURAS. THE RUMOR SEEMS UNLIKELY TO HAVE ANY BASIS IN FACT, BUT POINT WE WISH TO MAKE IS THAT EVEN WITH TITLE FREE AND CLEAR TO ITS PRESENT CARIBBEAN COASTLINE, GUATEMALA MAY HAVE NO ACCESS TO THE HIGH SEAS IF 12-MILE TERRITORIAL SEAS BECOME THE ACCEPTED RULE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. ON BASIS MAP PREPARED BY THE GEOGRAPHER (STATE A-7036, NOVEMBER 19, 1975), THE THEORETICAL EQUIDISTANT LINE BETWEEN GUATEMALAN AND HONDURAN WATERS COULD MEET A LINE DRAWN 12 MILES OUT FROM THE BELIZE CAYS AND COULD PREVENT GUATEMALAN SHIPS FROM ENTERING THE CARIBBEAN WITHOUT PASSING THROUGH EITHER BELIZEAN OR HONDURAN WATERS. IT FOLLOWS THAT BELIZE AND HONDURAS, BUT NOT GUATEMALA, WOULD ENJOY ECONOMIC AND FISHING RIGHTS BEYOND THE 12-MILE LIMIT IF 200-MILE PATRIMONIAL SEA BECOMES INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED. THEREFORE THE QUESTION OF HOW THE MARITIME BOUNDARY WILL BE DRAWN IS EXPECTED TO BE A MAJOR ISSUE IN ANY RESUMPTION OF UK-GUATEMALAN NEGOTIATIONS.

ANDREWS

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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